

CDF NEWS RELEASE

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection



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RELEASE August 29, 2001
DATE: 10:00 a.m.

Bus Fire Update

Willits - The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF) expects full control of the Bus Fire at 8:00 a.m. Friday, 8/31. Many of the resources released from the incident are being reassigned to other fires in the State. The fire was contained at 250 acres. Fire crews will remain on the fire today mopping up and patrolling the fire line.

The two Grumman S-2A airtankers that collided while fighting the fire are being removed from the crash site. Two separate investigations, one by the CDF Serious Accident Investigation Team and one by the NTSB will continue into the cause of the first mid-air collision in CDF history that killed CDF pilots Larry Groff and Lars Stratte..

Lars Stratte, the pilot of Tanker 92, resided in Redding and was assigned to the Chico Air Attack Base. Lars had been flying out of Chico for the past two fire seasons. Lars was a veteran pilot with over 12,000 hours of flight time. Larry Groff, the pilot of Tanker 87, resided in Healdsburg and was assigned to the Sonoma Air Attack Base. Larry was a veteran S-2 pilot spending the last 7 years flying out of Santa Rosa. Larry had over 4000 hours of flight time. Both pilots were current with all CDF requirements having completed annual training this past spring prior to fire season. This included additional ground school, actual flight time and diagnostic simulations. CDF pilots are required to have a minimum of 2000 hours of pilot in command time, instrument rating, multi-engine time and one year as a trainee flying with another pilot.

Funeral arrangements for both pilots are pending and will be released as soon as the details are finalized.



A fund has been set up for the memories of Larry and Lars. Those wishing to make a contribution can do so by sending their donations to:

Associated Airtanker Pilots Memorial Trust Fund
Newhart Bookkeeping
711 D Healdsburg Ave.
Healdsburg, CA 95448

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